



Farrar Pond and Pineloch in 1940

The origin of Farrar Pond has been covered by Harold McAleer in a previous article. Here I will attempt to describe what it was like to grow up in this spot and in this town. Then I'll show how our family's values melded with Lincoln's evolving philosophy of land use to lead us to where we are today.

When I was six I remember our parents leaving our home in the Waverly section of Belmont to find land to build a house "in the country". They found what they wanted in Lincoln on a high hillside on the east end of Farrar Pond, looking up its one-mile length. Ed Farrar insisted on selling them not just the house site, but also some 200 acres on the south side of Pole Brook all the way from Concord Road to the Sudbury River. Pole Brook, also known as Halfway Brook, runs under Concord Road (Rt. 126) into the east end of the lake and, originally, through Broad Meadow into Fairhaven Bay on the river. Its course is documented in old maps. This land sale was accomplished in the spring of 1925.

The large house was built by R.D. Donaldson, Sr. and we moved in within the year. We called our home Pine Loch. My father, Guilbert Winchell, commuted to work in Cambridge where he was manager of the Boston branch of the Liquid Carbonic Corporation, a producer of liquid carbon dioxide. My mother, Evelyn Saylor Winchell, had grown up in Pottstown, Pa. and brought her culture of flowers and a family farm to our new home. In addition to a large vegetable garden, we had a variety of dogs, chickens, pigs, two horses and one or two cows to be milked.

I have strong memories of starting school in the 2nd grade in the little red school house on Lincoln Road (now the Masonic Temple). Then I, along with my older brother Guilbert, younger brother Richard, and baby sister Dorothy Ann, all attended the Lincoln Public Schools and Concord High School.

Growing up on the Pond was idyllic. Our home provided us with swimming, fishing, skating and boating, right in our own back yard! We also learned about all the creatures of the pond, the catfish and the otters among them. We learned about the trees and plants of the woods along with its many creatures and birds, the flying squirrels and the osprey. I remember catching a large snapper in the pond with my brothers, and hacking it up for my mother to make soup (which we never ate), but that's another story! Lincoln life included the First Parish Church, the 4th of July Parade, the Bemis Lectures, the library and the Grange Fair, later to be replaced by the Codman Fair.

The old Farrar homestead, just to our north on Concord Road, was originally built in the late 1600s. In 1926 Ed and brother Sam and sister Mary were still living there, the end of a direct line of six generations of Farrars. Though Ed still had a small vegetable garden, the remnants of his famous vineyards, and one cow, there was ample evidence of the extensive farming life of the past. The fields in the valley were well preserved with 12 inches of top soil after generations of organic farming. An irrigation ditch extended from the brook at Concord Rd. and ran along both the north and south hillsides of the whole valley through which the stream was diverted during the summer. Remarkable stone bridges across Pole Brook still remain today and tolerate passage of truck and tractor. The Farrar barn was across the road from the house, on the east side of Concord Road. The fields beyond were less well preserved. Ed was dedicated to the preservation of his created pond and seemed comfortable with his selection of our family as its new trustee. He was a quiet, private person but we had a smooth relationship over the years. In this 1940 photo of a cook-out at Pineloch with family and friends Sam Farrar is on the left and Ed next to him.



One day Ed took me to an old oak tree in the middle of the woods and showed me a hatchet mark he said was made by Henry David Thoreau during a survey. Ed commented 'He was thought of as a ne'er do well by many farmers.' (I wish now that I had pushed him for more stories.) I do remember his bending over and picking a live trout out of the irrigation ditch in the field below his house. At one point he told us that the field next to Pine Loch, where we had our garden, was a Native American camp site. I don't know how he knew this, but over the next 15 years I found 16 arrowheads, as we tilled the soil. Dr.

Curtiss Hoffman of Bridgewater State College, in the SuAsCo Watershed Site Inventory Project identified some of these as dating back 8,000 years, and others 4,000 and 2000years.

In 1953 I returned to Lincoln after completing my medical training and certification in Internal Medicine. After serving in WW II and again during the Korean war, I now wanted to open a practice of primary care medicine in my home town. Enid and I had been married in England in 1949, and by this time had two children. We purchased a house on Lincoln Road with two bedrooms on the street side to use as an office, and thus it became the first physician's practice to be registered in Lincoln in 40 years (according to Bill Davis, the Town Clerk). Our family of four children, along with many cousins, spent much time at Pine Loch and Farrar Pond and enjoyed the same resources and pleasures I had growing up.

In 1960 our mother died after a long illness leaving Dad all alone in that large house. He began to look to the future and with the help of his lawyer, Bill Swift, arranged to give the large majority of the land and lake-bottom property to his four children over the three years, 1962 to 1965. Due to my mother's foresight and initiative, Hunter's field on Oxbow Road, of 15.5 acres, had been purchased in 1952 , providing 110-ft road frontage, in addition to the small frontage on Rt. 117. In 1954, the US Government took land by eminent domain for a Nike Missile Site in Wayland next to that property. The Nike site also included one half acre of our Lincoln land just over the Lincoln-Wayland line. They also leased a sight line across the field towards the Drumlin (now Audubon land), for a radar link.

Our family moved into Pine Loch with Dad in 1965 and we purchased that property of 26 acres in 1967. Our family of three boys and a girl, (William, Meg, Gordon (Skip), and Fred) then shared the same Pine Loch experience their elders had. Also like them, they went through the Lincoln Schools and on to Lincoln Sudbury High.

By then, with Dr. C. S. (Chuck) Keevil as my associate in our growing medical practice, we needed a larger Lincoln office. We obtained approval to build a Deck House office building on the property on Concord Road. Now the site of the Lincoln Physicians, this facility continues to serve the town well to the present day.

At this stage in our lives we became increasingly concerned with the preservation of Farrar Pond and our property on the south shore of the pond. At the same time the Lincoln Conservation Commission, stimulated by the Braun-Eliot Report of 1958, was evaluating all the Lincoln lands of conservation interest. In 1969, we four siblings needed a plan for the property. Rather than carve it up into four separate parcels we wanted it to remain intact so we asked the town boards how they felt we should proceed. Excerpts from a letter on Oct. 17, 1969 from Bob Allen, Chairman of the Planning Board: "The Planning Board is strongly in favor of some type of cluster development."... "We would hold open for joyful trespass the shore line of the property,protect the wildlife and maintain the paths..... assure responsibility for the dam." The family was in complete agreement and our friend, Ken Bergen, became our lawyer and advisor in this matter. He recommended the hiring of Joseph Skinner of Meredith and Grew to the town boards and, with two other consultants, proposed the innovative Open Space Residential District (OSRD) option for our Zoning Bylaws. This was adopted at the March town meeting in 1971. It provided for cluster housing with twice the number of smaller houses for smaller families than conventional R I zoning, and with less land committed to roads, leaving 70 % of the property preserved for open space.

The 1960's and 70's presented an urgent challenge to the Conservation Commission and the many individuals concerned about conservation of open space. The Codman Farm, Wheeler Farm, Mt. Misery acquisition, among others, were to be addressed, as well as our own concerns about Farrar Pond. In 1980 Massachusetts established the requirement of 100 % valuation on undeveloped land, thus raising taxes 400 % and putting pressure on land owners to do something with their large fallow tracts. In 1963 Bob Lemire joined the Conservation Commission and became fully committed to the preservation of open space for the town of Lincoln. He became chairman in 1965 and dedicated much of the next 12 years to this cause. His book 'Creative Land Development- Bridge to the Future', printed in 1979 and reprinted in 1986, documents both the challenges and Lincoln's responses in the many conferences and reports to educate the town. It also describes the pioneering actions that have made Lincoln a model for the rest of the country. With the support of the town boards and the approval of the OSRD, the Winchell siblings interviewed 8 applicants to develop the property. We selected David Bradley, a land developer from Weston, who then formed a joint partnership to produce condominium cluster housing on 80 acres to be known as Farrar Pond Village. This was approved by the town and constructed in several stages beginning in 1972. An unfortunate economic recession in the mid seventies caused a number of the partners to drop out, but luckily one of the partners, the Workingman's Cooperative Bank was able to complete the project. This new form of housing for Lincoln worked out well and has proven to be desirable, especially for Lincoln residents leaving larger homes but wishing to stay in town.

Then in 1978 Spaulding and Slye, and the architectural firm Sasaki Associates, presented a similar OSRD proposal for the remaining 63 acres, bordering on Farrar Pond and the Sudbury River at the March Town Meeting. The homeowners around the pond, the Winchell family, the Conservation Committee and Planning Board all supported the project but, because of protests by the neighbors, action was deferred until a special June town meeting. Study committees, including neighbors, board members and consultants, confirmed the original predictions of less traffic, shorter roads, lower population, (and more tax income for the town) and, in this case, an ancillary well site for Lincoln. Town meeting approval was assured and Lincoln Ridge became a reality.

Plans for management of the open land were coordinated with the Farrar Pond Associates, an organization consisting of homeowners of land around the pond including the lake bottom on the north side of Pole Brook. This neighborhood association had been formed in 1963, initially to address overgrowth of vegetation in the pond and the problem of illegal fishing. Tony Pickman was the first president of the Associates. He had purchased his shoreline property from the subdivision of the Farrar Homestead property after Ed Farrar's death in 1949. The Winchells kept the Associates and Tony informed of our development plans across the pond, and welcomed their input. In September 1978 the Associates voted to assume responsibility for the dam. The Farrar Pond Conservation Trust was established (with trustees from the Associates, the Condos, and the Town of Lincoln) to manage the pond and shore of the former Winchell property for the benefit of Lincoln residents. The Town's charge was to preserve the land in its "present wilderness state". Adjacent open land, as well as other land surrounding the condos was to be managed by the Farrar Village Conservation Trust and Lincoln Ridge Conservation Trust, with restrictions and beneficiaries similar to the Farrar Pond Conservation Trust. The trail along the lakeside and the connecting trails are managed by the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (under the careful eye of Buzz Constable). The Condo residents have boat and canoe access to the pond at several designated sites. Fishing is restricted to homeowners and their guests, and swimming is not attractive because of the shallowness of the pond and the muddy bottom.

The major concern for the Farrar Pond Associates over the years has been the overgrowth of invasive weeds and water lilies. The pond is shallow throughout with a muddy bottom. For ten years from 1966 to 1976 various chemical treatments were applied by Jason Cortell of 'Allied Biological', with some success, but these were abandoned when the water became cloudy. In 1989 the Associates undertook an extensive program under the direction of Lee Lyman of Lycott Environmental Inc. who proposed a four-year program for an estimated \$100,000 to include rebuilding the dam to permit drawdowns and the use of Sonar chemical treatments. This was financed by donations from the abutting homeowners. In 1976 Mrs. Colette Young, in her will, had deeded her property on Farrar Pond to the Massachusetts Audubon Society who then became a member of the Associates and thus a valued ecological presence. Dave Hill, delegate from Mass. Audubon, as their contribution to the Association, set up a tax free 'Audubon Farrar Pond Fund' to handle the donations. The drawdown, which we do about every three years, consists of lowering the lake level by about 4 ft in late September to compact the muddy bottom and flush out excessive nutrients caused, in part, by upstream runoff. After well frozen in the winter, the lake is then refilled, lifting the roots of vegetation. With continued monitoring by Lee Lyman and consultation with the Conservation Commission and Mass. Audubon we have used appropriate chemical treatments for invasive species like Eurasian Milfoil. Skating, during a drawdown, becomes more hazardous and the Police have posted a 'No Skating' sign on Rt. 117, which may not be required on a normal hard winter. Over the years town folk have loved to skate on Farrar Pond so we'll address that situation before the coming winter.

In 1991 the Winchell's Pine Loch Trust donated 12.5 acres of pond and shore to the Farrar Pond Conservation Trust, thus completing the trail around the south shore of the pond to the Pickman lane. The Winchells also gave an adjoining 1.3 acre house site overlooking the pond and a meadow to the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust. Three years later, the Pickmans developed several house lots on Sweet Bay Lane off Rte.117 and likewise donated 8 acres of lake and shore to the Farrar Pond Conservation Trust. So now we have a continuous unbroken stretch of preserved land and trail from Concord Road to the Sudbury River. At the dam it connects with a conservation trail to Rte. 117 and the Mt. Misery trail system, which was provided by Mrs. Militzer on the sale of her property in 1972. The town also acquired 12 acres for conservation by purchase and gifts of the beautiful 25-acre field, which lies between Farrar Pond and the Sudbury River and was known by the former owners, the Wheelers, as 'the Great Island'. The Bay Circuit Trail runs from Mt. Misery on these trails over the dam, by the Nike site and on to Wayland. There is also a canoe portage trail over the dam breast from Farrar Pond to the Sudbury River.

In 1975 Enid and I purchased two lots of the subdivided Farrar Homestead adjacent to our land which included the waterfall of Pole Brook over a granite ledge. My mother had always wanted to buy that from Ed Farrar with no success. We then obtained Conservation Commission approval for a one-half-acre pond in the swamp below the knoll (where we would build our retirement home in 1992), which we call Pine Knoll. The little pond has served as a swimming hole and a great source of fun for our five grandchildren in the adjoining lots, their friends and cousins, in all seasons. In addition it has served as an attraction for many forms of wild life and has given us much pleasure.



Enid and Gordon Winchell at their 50'th wedding anniversary at Pine Knoll in 1999, surrounded by their children and grandchildren.

Epilogue:

I look back with gratitude over these past 77 years of life in Lincoln, for this opportunity, this land, this town, this family, and all these friends who have brought us to this moment. Bob Lemire and wife Ginny now live in Farrar Pond Village and many of our Lincoln friends have made a similar move. My brother Richard has returned from Chicago to retire with his wife, Marty, to live in Lincoln Ridge. Brother Guilbert lives in his home 'Woodnotch' right on the Sudbury River, the site of the former Caderio Lodge, where he and Amy Jane raised their family. Son William and his wife Kati, with their three daughters, live in the old Pine Loch homestead. Son Fred and wife Theresa, with two children, have built a home, called 'Pine Croft', across Pole Brook from us. The two families share the pleasures of both ponds and space for recreation and vegetable gardens.

Our deep love for this land has joined with the forethought and support of this Town to continue Ed Farrar's dream of preserving this special place. May the Town of Lincoln, with its strong sense of place and preservation go on forever.

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